Managing National Assessment Report

Gore High School

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Gore High School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review

- manages assessment practice for national qualifications

- manages internal and external moderation

- makes use of and manages assessment-related data

- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and

- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*

- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed

- making suggestions for the school to consider to enhance good assessment practice.

What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.

- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.

- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Gore High School Assessment Handbook 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Gore High School Assessment Handbook 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
    - English
    - Science
    - Technology
- the Careers Teacher, who manages Gateway and Vocational Pathway courses
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

Gore High School

27-28 August 2019

Significant issues found

This review found a significant issue that the school must address to meet the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years. NZQA will return within 12 months to check that the school has developed a process to assure senior management that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA

The issue is that the school's monitoring process cannot provide an assurance that results reported in the end of year data file have been through an internal moderation process. The school must therefore develop a process to assure senior management that all results produced by school assessments have been appropriately quality assured before they are reported to NZQA.

Currently the Principal's Nominee visits each department early in the year to check internal moderation processes. This includes inspecting the moderation folders of selected standards and interviewing staff to reconcile documentation with actual practice. While robust, this process happens too late to provide a timely assurance the school is meeting the reporting requirements of its consent to assess.

Action required to address the significant issue

In order to address this issue, the school must:

- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA *(Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.4(b))*

Areas for improvement

The school must ensure staff follow resubmission requirements. A resubmission may be offered at the teacher's sole discretion if they judge a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. This would usually preclude all students in a class being offered a resubmission for an assessment.

The student handbook should be reviewed to ensure the information it contains is current, aligned to that in the staff handbook, and not repetitive.

Agreed action

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are:

- ensure staff follow resubmission requirements
- review the student assessment handbook.

What the school is doing well

Gore High School is responsive to external review and has addressed the agreed action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment report. The school also demonstrates the capacity to undertake its own review of the effectiveness of its assessment procedures and practice, leading to on-going improvements.

A range of academic and vocational courses are available to meet the assessment needs of its students and local employment opportunities. Relevant assessment contexts help engage student interest, while optional standards in some courses allow students to match their assessment to their goals and/or academic progress. Most assessment practices, including the provision of special assessment conditions to eligible students, are well managed and consistently applied by staff.

Internal moderation is an embedded process. The use of subject specialists to review and feedback on grade judgements for samples of student work allows staff to improve their knowledge of the standards they assess. Staff actively engage with external moderation and strategically request specific standards for moderation.

Student assessment data is checked for accuracy and reported to meet key dates. Annual analysis of NCEA data enables the school and departments to set strategic academic goals and informs course and programme design.

School communication ensures information on qualifications and assessment procedures is provided to its community. The range of formats used to distribute this information has enhanced the development of a shared understanding of the school processes and NCEA requirements. Teachers new to the school are supported to understand the school and NZQA's assessment processes.

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13 November 2019

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 31 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report   The school has addressed the agreed actions from the 2016 report including:

- the Principal's Nominee recording the outcomes of his meetings with Heads of Department early each year to review their moderation processes and practice

- using the same response processes for following up both NZQA and ITO external moderation

- producing course assessment outlines from a common template

- reviewing the staff handbook to ensure it reflects current practice.

- reviewing the student handbook and making it available on the school's website.

Some further review of the student handbook is suggested in the communications section of the report and the school has agreed to action this.

Response to external moderation outcomes   Where external moderation reports identify issues Heads of Department complete a response form detailing how they intend to address these and, if required, requesting support for planned actions. These are discussed with the Principal's Nominee, who checks on completion of any actions during his annual department review visits early in the following year.

The school could consider adding an evaluation section to the response form. This would give staff an opportunity to:

- provide feedback on the effectiveness of any actions taken in addressing issues

- consider if the standard should be recommended for future external moderation.

Response to data issues   In 2018, a subject was identified by NZQA as an outlier, across two separate levels, when internal and external results were statistically compared. The school has provided satisfactory explanations for the variations.

Internal review

Evidence for the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

As issues arise, school review ensures they are dealt with to improve outcomes for students. Examples include:

- putting the Gateway programme into two lines on the timetable to increase vocational opportunities for students

- swapping timetable days when it was discovered that the introduction of double periods was negatively impacting some Gateway students
- considering the frequency of meetings with Academic Counsellors to provide better opportunities for mentoring and the monitoring of students' academic progress.

Department review of assessment programmes and student achievement are embedded processes informed by analysis of data from NZQA and the school's student management system. These reviews inform decisions about courses, leading to the introduction of new courses such as Level 2 Science, or the modification of existing ones.

However, there is little evidence that departments initiate review of their assessment or moderation processes. Where this happens it is usually driven by senior management and initiated through external review such as external moderation. Encouraging departments to review their own assessment practice, such resubmission, would help consolidate staff understanding and develop greater consistency of practice. Assisting teachers to take greater ownership of assessment practice will also build the school's capacity to ensure credible assessment.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school could consider encouraging:

- staff to evaluate the effectiveness of any actions taken in response to external moderation
- departments to take ownership of their review of assessment and moderation practice.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 5.5)

Gore High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- introducing new or modifying existing courses to improve engagement and broaden the achievement pathways offered

- reducing the number of standards assessed in courses to allow students to focus on the quality of their results rather than the quantity of credits achieved

- providing flexibility within courses to give students some choice of the standards they will be assessed against, based upon their goals and/or progress

- using relevant local contexts in assessment tasks to engage student interest

- extending the range of assessment opportunities available through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Gateway programmes and Southern Institute of Technology's Murihiku Trade Academy courses

- making special assessment condition applications for potentially eligible students, keeping staff well informed about those who have an entitlement and ensuring appropriate support is provided through the Learning Hub.

Gore High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment, extensions, appeals and further assessment opportunities consistently

- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process

- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules

- collecting credible evidence to support derived grade applications

- providing support with the management of the exam centre

- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act,1993 when handling students' assessment information.

Ensure staff follow resubmission requirements   Staff understanding of the resubmission process is inconsistent and two of the three students interviewed had experienced situations where a whole class was offered a resubmission. To ensure consistent practice, the school should clarify with staff the requirement that it is the teacher who decides when, how and to whom a resubmission is offered. A resubmission may be offered if a teacher, at their discretion, judges a student has made a minor error or omission that the student can identify and correct on their own. These requirements are clearly outlined in the staff handbook.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects   Over the last five years Year 13 Māori students have, on average, achieved one or more STEM subjects at much the same rate as other students within the school. Student engagement with science in Years 9 and 10 has been improved by developing relationships with community

organisations, such as the Hokonui Rūnanga, that allow students to work on projects like monitoring water quality and the development of a local wetland. The introduction of an internally assessed Level 2 Science course has allowed a wider group of students to continue this engagement. The Principal noted that many students, including those identifying as Māori, are involved in Primary Industry and trade-based engineering courses as this is their planned pathway and often find employment in the local community.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure staff follow resubmission requirements.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 6.4b)

Gore High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- staff:
    - critiquing assessment material prior to use to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and provides students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
    - using published clarifications and school and NZQA exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
    - having subject specialists, either from within or outside the school, verify grades for selected samples of student work
    - documenting on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* the steps of their moderation processes, including noting verification discussion and decisions
- departments collating and storing in folders the assessment material for each standard, including the task, assessment schedule, resources, clarification, exemplars, previous external moderation reports and cover sheet.

Gore High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- staff strategically requesting inclusion of specific standards on the school's external moderation plan to confirm their understanding of the standards' requirements.

Strategically select samples of student work for grade verification   Several of the staff interviewed reported that student work may be selected randomly for grade verification. This is not best practice. The school should therefore provide staff with guidance on strategically selecting a sufficient sample of student work from around grade boundaries for grade verification to provide assurance that assessor decisions are consistent with the standard.

The grade verification process should ensure that teacher judgements are consistent with the standard before results are reported to NZQA. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed. Selecting strategically has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- providing staff with further guidance on the strategic selection of samples of student work for verification.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Gore High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- Departments analysing NCEA data to report annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees, mapping trends in student achievement, variance between Māori and New Zealand European students, and identifying areas for development

- staff analysing previous years' achievement data to inform current year course or programme design

- setting school-wide academic goals based upon comparative analysis of achievement data

- Academic Counsellors and Deans assisting students to set academic goals and track their progress towards meeting these through the online portal of the school's student management system.

Gore High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis

- checking for, and correcting where necessary, data submission errors shown on the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA

- having students take ownership of their results by signing-off on the accuracy of their grades

- confirming the accuracy of external entries prior to key dates to reduce late entries

- only reporting results for standards for which the school has consent to assess, or against the provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

Clarify the responsibility for removing entries with no result   The school should clarify the process for removing entries without a result, especially who makes the decision in each case. In 2018, the school submitted only a few entries without a result in its final data submission. However, this was because the Principal's Nominee withdrew these from the school's student management system before the submission. If the assessing staff are not involved in the decision to withdraw an entry there is the possibility that a result exists and should be reported. The consequences of results going unreported include students failing to meet qualification or award requirements or missing a place in a preferred course, for example.

Foster student use of the NZQA Learner Login   While the school continues to provide students with information on registering for their NZQA Learner Login, the percentage of senior students doing so has dropped from 93 per cent in 2016 to 86 per cent in 2018. Students interviewed noted it was easier to use the online access to the school's student management system to check their academic progress, and the information available was more current. However, they were not aware of the features available to them through their NZQA Learner Login. The school should continue to foster student use of the Learner Login as only it enables them to:

- confirm the accuracy of their entries and the results reported to NZQA by the school and used to award qualifications
- order copies of qualification certificates
- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers
- print an official copy of their Record of Achievement.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- clarifying the process for withdrawing entries without results before the final data file submission
- fostering student use of the NZQA Learner Login.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

Gore High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring that students are provided with information about the assessment in each of their courses

- communicating information on NCEA, and assessment procedures to staff, students and their families in print, in person and digitally, including through the school Facebook page, emails and texts

- helping students to set academic goals and providing them with information, including that supplied by NZQA, on what they need to achieve in order to gain their NCEA.

Gore High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- supporting teachers new to NCEA and/or new to the school to understand the school and NZQA's assessment processes

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at Head of Department and staff meetings.

Review student handbook   The student handbook requires review to ensure the information it contacts is current, aligned to that in the staff handbook, and is not repetitive. Information should be included on:

- fees for international students

- registering and using their NZQA Learner Login

- their right to decide if examples of their work can be shared with other students (*Copyright Act 1994*).

The school should also consider personalising the handbook to encourage students to manage their own assessment practice. Using the personal pronoun "you" rather than the third person "student" would help students understand and engage with actions they personally need to take to meet school and NZQA requirements.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the student assessment handbook.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- personalising the student guide for its intended audience.